

Core Question 3: Is the organization effective and well run?

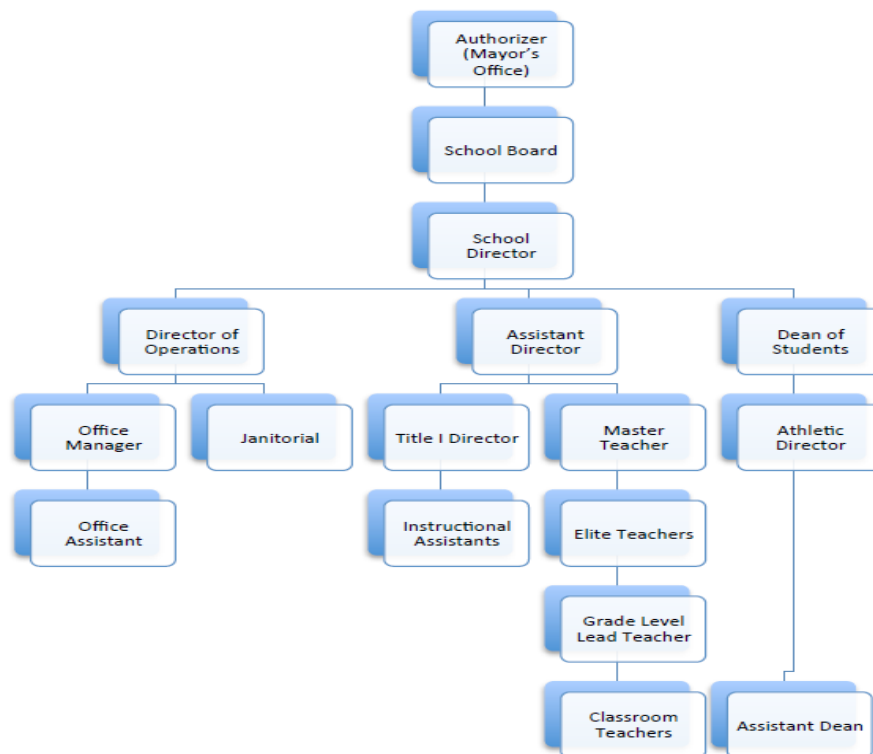
The Governance and Leadership Performance Framework, outlined in Core Question 3, gauges the academic and operational leadership of schools. Core Question 3 consists of five indicators designed to measure schools on how well their school administration and board of directors comply with the terms of their charter agreement, applicable laws, and authorizer expectations.

3.1. Is the school leader strong in his or her academic and organizational leadership?							
Indicator Targets	Does not meet standard	The school leader presents concerns in a majority of the sub-indicators with no evidence of a credible plan to address the issues.					
	Approaching standard	The school leader presents concerns in a minimal number of the sub-indicators and may or may not have a credible plan to address the issues.					
	Meets standard	The school leader complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.					
	Exceeds standard	The school leader consistently and effectively complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.					
3.1 Rating	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
	AS	AS	MS	ES			
Sub-indicator Ratings	Sub-indicators						Rating
	Demonstration of sufficient academic and leadership experience						ES
	Leadership stability in key administrative positions						MS
	Communication with internal and external stakeholders						ES
	Clarity of roles among schools and staff						MS
	Engagement in a continuous process of improvement and establishment of systems for addressing areas of deficiency in a timely manner						ES
	Consistency in providing information to and consulting with the schools' board of directors						MS

In the 2013-2014 school year, the school leadership team at Paramount School of Excellence (PSOE) exhibited exceptional academic and operational expertise. The school leadership team is comprised of a School Director (SD), Assistant School Director (ASD), and Director of Operations (DO) and has remained relatively stable over time. Roles and responsibilities are clearly delineated with the SD maintaining general oversight to monitor overall school performance.

The SD and ASD consistently communicated with internal and external stakeholders, including the school staff, board of directors, Board Chair, Mayor's Office (OEI), and community organizations and partners. The school leadership team has worked over the past several years to build several meaningful relationships within the community (including the Pacers, Colts, Indy11, Honda, and local engineers) and has organized several community-driven events (including clean-up days and farmer's markets). Additionally, the SD organized regular professional development sessions for school staff that were optional, yet highly attended.

Organizational Chart



Over the last couple of years, the school leadership team has engaged in an intensive and focused process of school improvement. They have implemented extensive data analysis systems to identify student strengths and needs, incorporated regular classroom observations to provide instructional feedback, utilized restorative justice to maximize student time in the classroom, and have developed a robust assortment of clubs, programs, and extracurricular activities for students to directly apply their knowledge in engaging and relevant ways. PSOE worked collaboratively with the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) as well as a contracted consultant to receive objective feedback on the culture and instruction within the school. Additionally, the school utilized staff surveys to ensure a healthy working environment throughout the year. Although there were often many initiatives occurring at once, the leadership team was able to maintain focus on student achievement, all contributing to the school receiving an "A" on the state's accountability report card for the 2013-2014 year.

A thorough report was provided to the board at every meeting that included sections on multiple measures of school performance. Information was consistently accurate, relevant, and timely. Due to the consistently exceptional operational and academic leadership of PSOE, the school is exceeding standard for this indicator.

3.2. Does the school satisfactorily comply with all its organizational structure and governance obligations?							
Indicator Targets	Does not meet standard		The school presents concerns in a majority of the sub-indicators with no evidence of a credible plan to address the issues.				
	Approaching standard		The school presents concerns in a minimal number of the sub-indicators and may or may not have a credible plan to address the issues.				
	Meets standard		The school complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.				
	Exceeds standard		The school consistently and effectively complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.				
3.2 Rating	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
	MS	MS	ES	MS			
Sub-indicator Ratings	Sub-indicators						Rating
	Submission of all required compliance documentation in a timely manner as set forth by the Mayor's Office, including but not limited to: meeting minutes and schedules, board member information, compliance reports and employee documentation						AS
	Compliance with the terms of its charter, including amendments, school policies and regulations, and applicable federal and state laws						MS
	Proactive and productive collaboration with its board and/or management organization (if applicable) in meeting governance obligations						MS
	Active participation in scheduled meetings with OEI, including the submission of required documentation by deadlines						MS

During the 2013-2014 school year, the Director of Operations was primarily responsible for submitting compliance documents to the Mayor's Office (OEI) and the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE). While the DO worked to ensure all compliance documents and reports, such as employee spreadsheets, board meeting minutes, and quarterly reports, were submitted, there were occasions when they were submitted after the deadline.

Additionally, PSOE maintained compliance with all material sections of its charter and submitted amendments as necessary. The SD was consistently engaged in meetings with OEI and maintained frequent communication with OEI between scheduled meetings. For these reasons, PSOE is meeting standard for compliance obligations

3.3. Is the school's board active, knowledgeable, and does it abide by appropriate policies, systems, and processes in its oversight?							
Indicator Targets	Does not meet standard		The school presents concerns in a majority of the sub-indicators with no evidence of a credible plan to address the issues.				
	Approaching standard		The school presents concerns in a minimal number of the sub-indicators and may or may not have a credible plan to address the issues.				
	Meets standard		The school complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.				
	Exceeds standard		The school consistently and effectively complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.				
3.3 Rating	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
	AS	AS	MS	MS			
Sub-indicator Ratings	Sub-indicators						Rating
	Timely communication of organizational, leadership, academic, fiscal, or facility deficiencies to the Mayor's Office; or when the school's management company (if applicable) fails to meet its obligations as set forth in the charter						MS
	Clear understanding of the mission and vision of the school						ES
	Adherence to board policies and procedures, including those established in the by-laws, and revision of policies and procedures, as necessary						MS
	Recruitment and selection of members that are knowledgeable, represent diverse skill sets, and act in the best interest of the school and establishment of systems for member orientation and training						MS
	Effective and transparent management of conflicts of interest						MS
	Collaboration with school leadership that is fair, timely, consistent, and transparent in handling complaints or concerns						MS
	Adherence to its charter agreement as it pertains to governance structure						MS
	Holding of all meetings in accordance with Indiana Open Door Law						MS

The board of directors at PSOE is active, experienced, and clearly committed to the mission and vision of the school. The board is comprised of individuals with experience in law, education, business, finance, healthcare, and community engagement. Overall membership was relatively stable with a few changes: a new Board Chair was elected, one director rolled off, and two new directors joined.

A review of meeting minutes and notes demonstrates the board's clear commitment to the school's mission to "inspire learning through an unparalleled academic approach". Along with regular oversight of the school's academic and financial performance, board members regularly engaged in thoughtful discussion around the long-term growth and sustainability of the school, its interaction with the community, and how best to holistically serve the needs of students. For example, to accommodate a growing demand for enrollment, the board discussed at length the feasibility of expanding the enrollment capacity. After determining the school's academics to be stable, the board agreed to expand. They hired a Director of School Advancement to ensure continued financial stability as well as a Director of Environmental Education to build out additional school programming.

Skill Sets Represented on Board

Business



Education



Finance



Legal



Healthcare



Community



Board Overview

Paramount School of Excellence, Inc. holds the charter for Paramount School of Excellence.

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Members

majority

Required for Quorum

The PSOE board meets monthly.

Paramount School of Excellence is the only school operated by the board. Currently, it does not contract out with a Charter Management Organization or an Education Service Provider.

The Board Chair and School Director maintained consistent communication with one another and the Mayor's Office (OEI). They both were proactive in providing to OEI up to date and transparent information about school performance, concerns, and future plans throughout the course of the year.

Regarding governance operations, the board maintained proper oversight of its bylaws and appropriately handled conflicts of interest when they were disclosed. Board meetings were held monthly and occurred as scheduled. While the board regularly met quorum, attendance varied, with an average of 2-3 directors absent at each meeting. Since there are noted conflicts of interest that prevent certain directors from voting on specific items, this varying attendance prevented action from being taken at some meetings. All meetings abided by Indiana Open Door Law. Due to the board's overall consistent leadership and stewardship, PSOE is meeting standard on this indicator.

3.4. Does the school's board work to foster a school environment that is viable and effective?							
Indicator Targets	Does not meet standard		The school presents concerns in a majority of the sub-indicators with no evidence of a credible plan to address the issues.				
	Approaching standard		The school presents concerns in a minimal number of the sub-indicators and may or may not have a credible plan to address the issues.				
	Meets standard		The school complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.				
	Exceeds standard		The school consistently and effectively complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.				
3.4 Rating	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
	n/a	n/a	n/a	AS			
Sub-indicator Ratings	Sub-indicators						Rating
	Regular communication with school leadership and/or its management company						ES
	Annual utilization of a performance based evaluation to assess its own performance, that of the school leader, and management organization (if applicable)						DNMS
	Collaboration with the school leader to establish clear objectives, priorities, and goals						AS
	Interaction with school leader that is conducive to the success of the school, including requesting and disseminating information in a timely manner, providing continuous and constructive feedback, and engaging the school leader in school improvement plans						ES

The PSOE board held monthly meetings at which all stakeholders, including the school leadership team and relevant staff members, provided updated reports. Between meetings, the Board Chair met regularly with the School Director to offer additional feedback, guidance, and support.

At the close of the 2013-2014 school year, the board had not yet implemented a formal method of evaluating the School Director's performance or that of its own. While the board did provide informal formative feedback throughout the year and guided the SD to focus on specific priorities, the lack of a formalized evaluation system prevented the board from objectively analyzing performance at the close of the year. The board did engage in informal self-reflection and discussed plans to move to a more strategic method of operating, including the creation of active committees and changing the structure of meetings to be more policy-driven for the 2014-2015 school year.

The board and school leadership team appeared to have positive and collaborative working relationships. All observed meetings and communications were respectful and supportive, indicating a shared commitment to the school's mission. However, due to the lack of formalized evaluation systems, PSOE is approaching standard for school and board environment.

3.5. Does the school comply with applicable laws, regulations, and provisions of the charter agreement relating to the safety and security of the facility?							
Indicator Targets	Does not meet standard		The school presents concerns in a majority of the sub-indicators with no evidence of a credible plan to address the issues.				
	Approaching standard		The school presents concerns in a minimal number of the sub-indicators and may or may not have a credible plan to address the issues.				
	Meets standard		The school complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.				
	Exceeds standard		The school consistently and effectively complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.				
3.5 Rating	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
	MS	MS	MS	MS			
Sub-indicator Ratings	Sub-indicators						Rating
	Health and safety code requirements						MS
	Facility accessibility						MS
	Updated safety and emergency management plans						MS
	A facility that is well suited to meet the curricular and social needs of the students, faculty, and members of the community						ES

In 2013-14, PSOE's facility met all health and safety code requirements and provided a safe environment conducive to learning. The facility's design, size, maintenance, security, equipment and furniture were all adequate to meet the school's needs. With a focus on environmental education, the numerous "Discovery Zones" and elaborate outdoor education space significantly contributes to the overall student experience. The school was accessible to all, including people with physical disabilities. The Mayor's Office monitoring of PSOE's compliance with health and safety code requirements did not reveal any significant concerns related to these obligations. Accordingly, the school is meeting standard for this indicator for 2013-14.